

## Setting higher standards in Manned Guarding...

...As the security industry strives towards best practice, Ian Johnson, Group Managing Director of security and risk management consultancy IJA, discusses one way in which the industry's organisations are already working towards raising standards in Manned Guarding Services.

There are a number of good organisations serving the security industry these days, but as a founder member of The Security Institute (TSI), I am a particularly staunch supporter of the part it is playing in promoting the security role and encouraging a greater degree of professionalism. The Institute, through its strict and rigorous validation process, endorses high standards in the education and training of security professionals. The validation programme is designed to assess security management experience, academic qualifications, vocational qualifications and contributions to the security profession. The issue of standards is really at the heart of The Security Institute's Code of Ethics that "any security organisation must operate the highest ethical values to engender trust in its customers and staff. Because of the high profile of the security industry, any failure in ethical standards by a security organisation or individual practitioner will reflect adversely on the security profession as a whole".

The Security Institute recognizes that raising standards does not just begin and end with the individual security practitioner, but that end-users may need guidance on how to procure the best security services and systems. To this end, The Security Institute has produced an important contribution towards best practice in relation to both security personnel and systems. A working party, which included the BSIA as well as service providers, customers, security consultants and academics, addressed the issue of purchasing and managing security guarding services. The result is a comprehensive set of guidelines to clients on desirable levels of service, published as the 'Guide to the Procurement and Management of Manned Security Services'. The Institute is also currently working on a second document to advise managers on the procurement, installation and management of CCTV systems.

One of the key points realised from the first guide was the need for security guarding customers to implement procedures and policies to both monitor and develop the performance of such services. In other words, they should not just be seeking value for money but be able to ensure they are obtaining a sufficient level of response and support from their chosen security guarding supplier. A good deal of confusion and misunderstanding exists within the industry over who is responsible for what regarding the implementation of a security-guarding contract. One of the difficulties arises from a grey area in the market between assignment instructions (AI's) and site security instructions. At the outset of the contract a site review and risk assessment needs to be carried out to determine reasonable, sensible measures for protection, establish the number of security officers required etc. AI's must also be agreed between the client and the contractor, covering specific aspects of the officers' duties.

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In an area of rising guarding costs, clients should carefully consider the quality and standard of the officers employed and look for a way to regularly interact with them, such as through contract review meetings and reports. At the outset, a Service Level Agreement (SLA) must be created, setting out clearly the client's expectations of the services to be provided by the contractor company (a typical SLA structure is detailed in The Security Institute's Guide). The SLA should also refer to Key Performance Indicators, with the third element comprising the Assignment Instructions. There needs to be transparent evidence of ongoing training and honest reporting to the client about aspects such as any weaknesses that the company cannot control because it does not have the resources to remedy the situation. This may arise from an increased threat level, but whatever the reason it needs to be put in writing, as part of professional contract management procedures which are more proactive and help to justify the extra remuneration that clients will need to pay in future, as licensing of the guarding sector takes effect.

The era of security industry regulation should usher in further changes. The whole customer relationship process needs to adapt. It's all about creating a tangible sense of partnership and bringing about added value to the client without letting standards drop.

If you would like further advice on managing guarding contracts or would like further information regarding The Security Institute (TSI), call our consultants on +44 (0) 1252 782664 or alternatively email: [info@ija.co.uk](mailto:info@ija.co.uk)

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